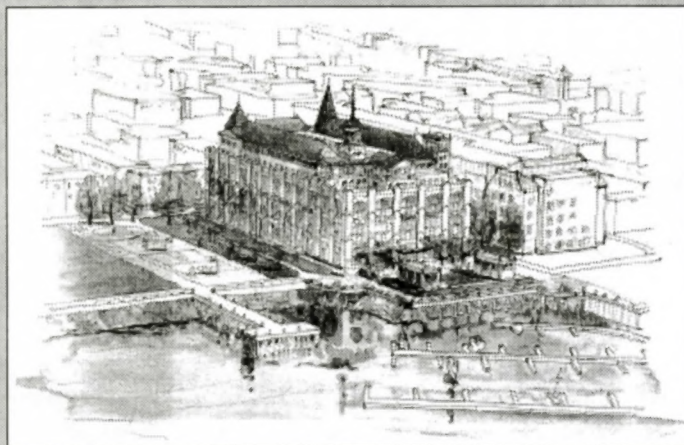


THE BOSTON INFORMER

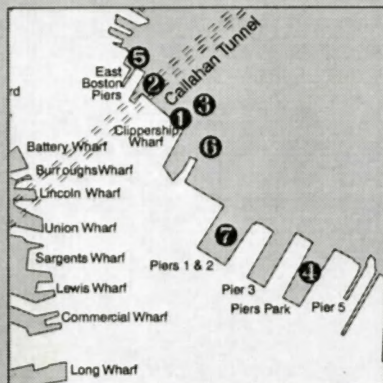
No. 61

For people who care about Boston

May-June 2003



Source: Maverick Gardens: ICON architecture;
Hodge Boiler: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects



◀ Proposed Hodge Boiler Works

Change in East Boston

Library
Boston Architectural Center

▼ Proposed Maverick Gardens



Redevelopment of the East Boston waterfront seems finally ready to happen. A combination of projects planned and permitted years ago and new projects has made East Boston a development area where things are being built.

① Clippership Wharf—First proposed in the early 1980s, Clippership Wharf was put on hold two times before the current development was advanced in 2001. Clippership Wharf will be located south of Maverick Square on 12 acres of vacant waterfront property. The project features 400 condominiums, 50 affordable condominiums, artist live/work units, retail and 694 parking spaces. Architect: CBT.

② Maverick Gardens—The Boston Housing Authority (BHA) residential development is being redesigned to include a midrise building at New and Sumner streets with 80 units and 20 townhouse/rowhouse buildings. South of the main Maverick Gardens site is Carlton Wharf, recently acquired by BHA from the Clippership Wharf developers. This parcel will include a six-story midrise building,

including 80 rental units and 30 affordable home-ownership units. Architect: ICON architecture.

③ Maverick MBTA—As part of the MBTA's Blue Line Modernization Project, Maverick station will be completely renovated to accommodate six-car trains, handicapped persons, and to improve circulation for pedestrians and vehicles in Maverick Square. Originally part of the Central Artery/Tunnel Project as an early-action item, the improvements won't be completed until 2005. Architect: DMJM/Harris

④ Piers Park II—Piers Park II, slated to be built adjacent to the existing Piers Park, has been waiting for funding for the past five years. Designed by Pressley Associates and SEA for Massport, the \$17 million bond issue for construction costs has been repeatedly delayed by the Commonwealth Legislature. Attempts by East Boston groups to have Roseland, Pier 1 developer, fund the park have failed.

⑤ Hodge Boiler Works—Between Carlton Wharf and LoPresti Park is the

Hodge Boiler Works site, currently occupied by a dilapidated timber wharf and three 1902 industrial buildings. Boiler Works LLC is proposing 109 units, including 15 studios, 32 one-bedroom, 20 two-bedroom and 42 two-bedroom duplex units. The project will provide underground parking for 164 (1.5 spaces per unit) and a 100-slip marina. Architect: Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects, Inc.

⑥ East Boston Greenway—The first half-mile of the proposed 3.5-mile multi-use path has been completed along an abandoned rail corridor. This first segment begins at Marginal Street and ends at Porter Street; the path will eventually connect to the Central Artery Bremen Street Park, Constitution Beach and Belle Isle Marsh.

⑦ Portside at Pier One—Hoping to end over 20 years of planning for reuse of Massport's East Boston piers, the Roseland Property Company will secure a long-term lease and develop over 575 units of housing. Roseland will contribute \$6 million to renovate nearby Boston Harbor Shipyard and Marina. Architect: DiMella Shaffer.

People Movers

Seth Gitell, from Boston Phoenix political reporter to press secretary for Mayor Menino.

Carole Brennan, from Mayor Menino press secretary to Massport director of Communications and Public Affairs.

Chuck Sterling, from MassHighway to Mass. Turnpike Authority.

Lynn Ahlgren, from Cambridge Systematics to Fitzgerald & Halliday.

Marilyn Swartz-Lloyd, from Beth Israel Deaconess to president and CEO at MASCO.

Betsy Johnson, from Boston Natural Areas Network to Executive Director of the Chef's Collaborative.

Christi Wrigley, from Somerville Office of Housing and Community Development to MASCO Planning.

Susan Gittelman, from director of Real Estate at Urban Edge Housing Corporation to Executive Director of a B'nai B'rith affordable housing organization.

Lee Maloney, from MBTA to URS.

John Carlson, from TAMS Consultants to CBT.

1 Harvard Wins Rail Yards Battle—MassPike, desperate for cash to pay for the Central Artery/Tunnel project, sold the 91-acre Allston rail yards and Turnpike air rights to Harvard University for \$75 million. Mayor Menino, Secretary of State Galvin, and originally, the MBTA and Massport, registered strong objections.

In the course of the transaction, the MBTA threatened to take part of the yards by eminent domain to protect its easements for through routes and commuter rail car storage.

In the final sales agreement these easements are supposedly guaranteed, although, curiously, they were not part of the first set of documents filed by Harvard with the Registry of Deeds. The easements were reinstated at the request of Galvin.

This is not the first clash between academia and political entities over the rail yards. See the 1995 Boston Informer piece below!

2 West End Planning—In response to proposed expansions by Massachusetts General Hospital, Charles River Plaza, and the Mass. Trial Court, a West End Planning Group was formed in April 2002 by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA). The Group consists of neighborhood residents, business owners, institutions and property owners, plus BRA and City staff.

In March 2003, the BRA and the Planning Group published a report, "Framework for Planning and Development of the West End Area," which divided the West End into five subareas: Charles River Park, Charles River Plaza, Massachusetts General Hospital, Nashua Street area, Lindemann Center and Brooke Courthouse. For each subarea, a set of planning principles was developed for open spaces, community character, transportation, land use and community facilities.

The next step will be development of a long-range plan based on the planning principles. For copies of the framework, call Kim Jones at the BRA, 617-918-4264.

Historical note: A previous plan for the West End, developed in 1957 by the BRA, without neighborhood consultation, resulted in demolition of the West End neighborhood and construction of Charles River Park.

3 Turnpike 'Slingshot' Back Again—

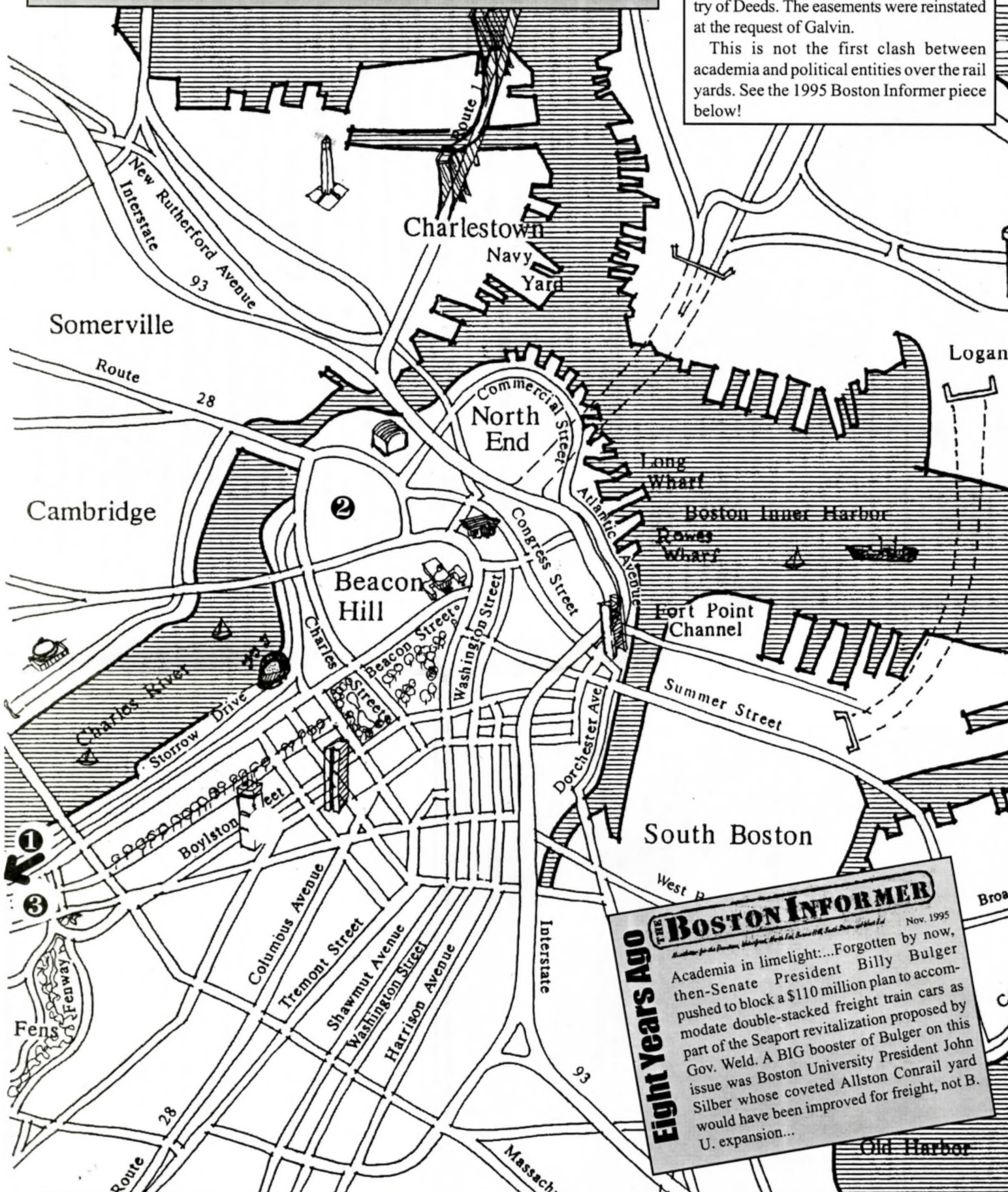
There is a major logistical problem for the new \$700 million South Boston Convention Center due to open next year. Most of the convention hotels are in the Back Bay, near the Hynes Convention Center, with very few hotel rooms in South Boston. A related problem is that the Mass. Turnpike connecting South Boston and the Back Bay has no eastbound entrance ramps and no westbound exits in the Back Bay.

A solution proposed several years ago was to build a "slingshot" ramp system near Massachusetts Avenue that would allow buses and cabs entering the westbound Turnpike ramp to turn 180 degrees onto the eastbound side to go to South Boston. However, this concept is so complex to engineer that the Legislature included \$15 million in a bond bill to study and plan it.

A simple solution recently proposed is to build a turnaround ramp system at the Allston toll booths, almost two miles farther west. Assuming Bechtel is not involved, it should be possible to design and build this with the bond bill \$15 million.

James Rooney, interim executive director of the Mass. Convention Center Authority (MCCA), was quoted in the Boston Globe as saying the trip from the Back Bay hotels to the South Boston Convention Center would take only six to ten minutes. However, most Back Bay hotels are located several signalized intersections away from the westbound Turnpike entrances. It seems likely that more often than not, it would take six to ten minutes for the 80 bus loads of conventioners leaving each morning just to reach the Turnpike entrance, let alone complete the almost six-mile trip to the Convention Center.

Dorchester Bay



THE BOSTON INFORMER Nov. 1995
Academia in limelight...Forgotten by now, then-Senate President Billy Bulger pushed to block a \$110 million plan to accommodate double-stacked freight train cars as part of the Seaport revitalization proposed by Gov. Weld. A BIG booster of Bulger on this issue was Boston University President John Silber whose coveted Allston Conrail yard would have been improved for freight, not B. U. expansion...

Charles/MGH Station Under Construction



Proposed new MBTA Charles/MGH station from Charles Street. The station will be completely rebuilt with elevator and escalators, at-grade pedestrian access, and a redesigned traffic scheme at Charles Circle.

Construction of the new MBTA Charles/MGH station has started, with utility work and other site preparation work the first activities. The impetus for the project is the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1992 and the MBTA's Key Station Plan. Construction of the \$28 million station is expected to be complete in 2006.

The station, built in 1931-2, used to have underground passageways for pedestrians to avoid conflicts with automobiles when crossing to the station. In 1961, the Metropolitan District Commission—owners of the land the station sits on—built (and still owns) the overhead walkways to the station. The MBTA built the mezzanine and the underground passageways were closed at the same time.

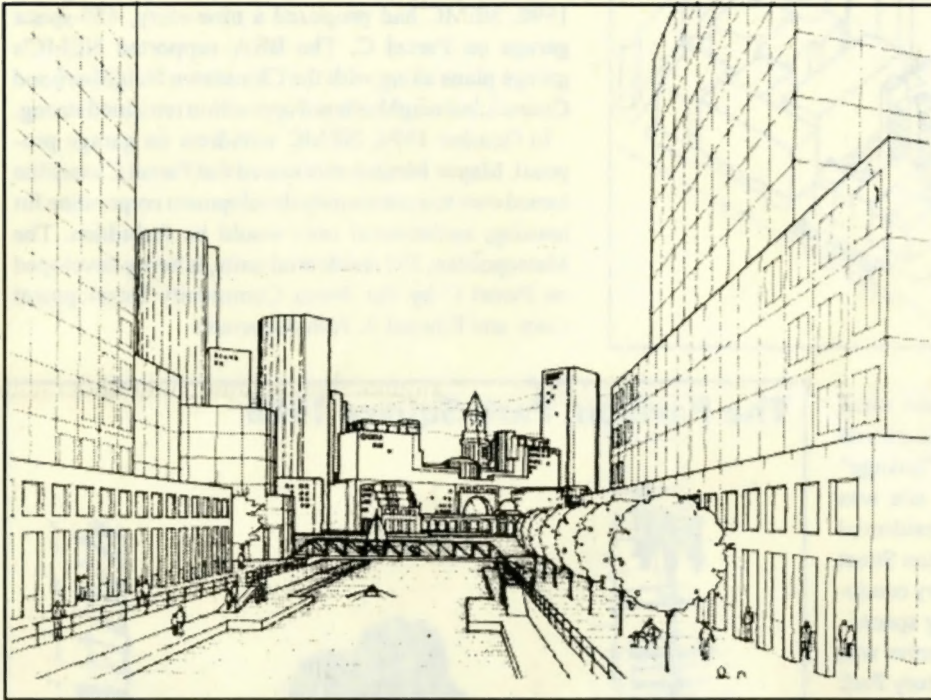
The new station design includes elimination of the overhead walkways, at-grade pedestrian entry, an enlarged island for the new station, one elevator per platform, no mezzanine, noise barriers at the portal, improved platforms, and redesigned roadways at Charles Circle. The off-ramp lanes from Storrow Drive would be realigned and would allow the island on which the station is located to be enlarged.

The new station was designed by Elkus Manfredi Architects and HDR Engineering.

What Might Have Been

THE BOSTON INFORMER

July 2003



Source: Fan Pier/Pier 4 FEIR/Skidmore, Owings and Merrill

Proposed Fan Pier canal connecting Fort Point Channel to proposed cove in Pier 4 (1986)

"Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans." John Lennon

Longstanding debates about the role of planning included the belief that the local planning agency should serve as a "lubricant of the market" or the community servant determined to pursue societal goals. Over time, "master" plans became controversial, focusing too much on efficiency and order and coordinating public and private development efforts. Like many municipal master plans, Boston's last real master plan, developed in 1965, hasn't been the guide to social and physical development it was made out to be. Planning as a process that initially selects ends, criteria, alternatives to evaluate and a preferred alternative followed emphasis on master plans.

Consequently, a number of planning processes have been developed by the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA) over the past few decades. Many of these processes have identified goals and desired ends, only to later abandon them because of quite reactive responses.

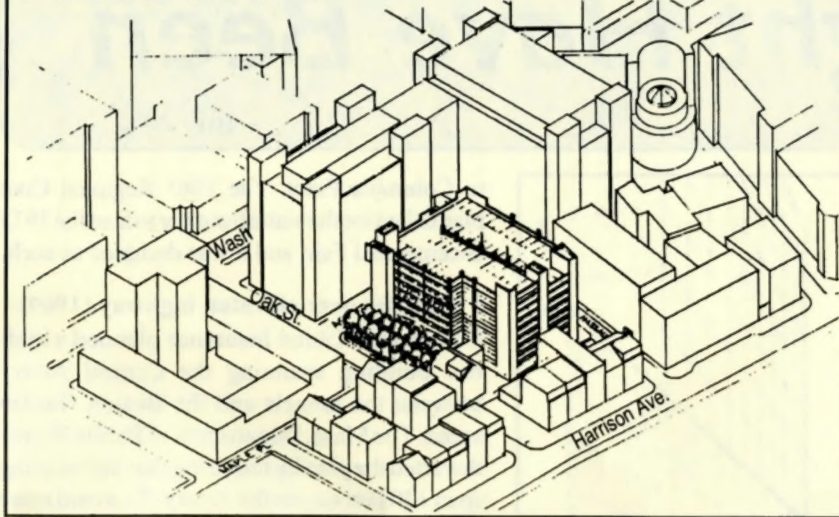
- **Beacon Street High-Rise Spine (1968)** – The Charles River side of Beacon Street in the Back Bay was to have a spine of high-rises as developed in a plan by Professor Von Moltke. The reaction to this scheme was to develop a high-rise spine along the MassPike, now under way.
- **UMass in Copley Square (1968)** – UMass-Boston was to be located in Copley Square where the Copley Place development is. A negative response from the Back Bay community to the proposed 15,000-student facility caused a rethinking of the location

to Columbia Point. The 1965 Regional Core plan called for the waterfront site to host the 1975 Bicentennial Fair, and it was designed as such.

- **Mid-rise over elevated highway (1969)** – Commercial Union Insurance planned a mid-rise building spanning the Central Artery between the tunnels and the Boston Garden arena. The Mass. Department of Public Works thwarted the plan by requiring that the building span 120 feet across the Artery. To avoid more agency meddling, the company built its headquarters just outside BRA Government Center Urban Renewal jurisdiction at School and Tremont streets.
- **State Street Federal Reserve (1969)** – The Federal Reserve was planning a building along State Street, between Custom House and Merchants Row. To avoid delay if met with resistance, the Fed was simultaneously planning and designing its present building at Dewey Square (again outside the BRA review).

- **Southwest Expressway (1948)** – Planned as part of the Commonwealth's Master Highway Plan, the I-95 extension and the Inner Belt, I-695, were killed by Gov. Sargent's 1970 moratorium on highway construction. The Southwest Corridor Project—Orange Line relocation, Amtrak upgrade and linear park—replaced the highway plan.
- **Fan Pier/Pier 4 (1986)** – The approved master plan for the combined site allowed 2.97 million s.f. of residential, office, hotel and retail. Ten buildings and a canal connecting Fort Point Channel and a Pier 4 cove. Building heights were as high as 500 feet, 2,500 parking spaces would be built, and no significant transit was even being discussed. The plan collapsed when the recession hit and the partners disagreed over profits. Current plans for the site, less the land occupied by the Moakley Federal Courthouse and Pier 4, call for 4.28 million s.f. of development and 2,325 parking spaces.
- **Silver Line (1987)** – John Drew, Commonwealth Pier/World Trade Center (WTC) developer, shook up the MBTA in 1987 by proposing to build an elevated people mover between South Station and WTC. Responding to the monorail proposal and the projected 10.6 million s.f. of development in the South Boston Piers area, the MBTA studied six transit alternatives including an "underground people mover to Boylston/Chinatown-Essex." Given the pace of development in South Boston, ease of implementation was key. The underground people mover "could be operational in 1996." The people mover became the Silver Line, and the South Boston leg of the service will open in winter 2004.

Parcel C 1993



The **Pavilion**, a 15-story residential, office and retail complex planned for the parcel at Charles Street South and Stuart Street, was proposed as one of Boston's "linkage" developments. Development of this downtown site was linked to development of the Tree of Life, a retail, residential and community health center complex on Washington Street in the South End. The Pavilion was to have 86 luxury condominiums, child care, a health club and 200 parking spaces.

Due to the economy, the Tree of Life health center was actually built before the downtown site. The 17-story Park Residences, under construction by MDA/Millennium Partners-Boston, has replaced the Pavilion. Two years ago, it went through a major change, dropping the hotel and becoming all residential.

The Pavilion, Park Square 1988



Megaplex 1995



The fight between New England Medical Center (NEMC) and Chinatown over **Parcel C in Chinatown** began in 1986 when NEMC proposed an 850-car parking garage. Although the proposal was quickly defeated, the rationale for a parking garage had been advanced.

In 1988, the BRA committed to a community center on Parcel C and provided money for planning. By 1990, NEMC had proposed a nine-story, 450-space garage on Parcel C. The BRA supported NEMC's garage plans along with the Chinatown Neighborhood Council, but neighborhood opposition remained strong.

In October 1994, NEMC withdrew its garage proposal. Mayor Menino announced that Parcel C would be turned over to a community development corporation for housing; institutional uses would be forbidden. The Metropolitan, 251 residential units, is being developed on Parcel C by the Asian Community Development Corp. and Edward A. Fish Associates.

With the N.E. Patriots talking to Connecticut for a new home, the Legislature's **Megaplex** Commission responded to pressure to study site, program and financing alternatives for a megaplex. The megaplex would include a domed 70,000-seat football stadium, 200,000 s.f. exhibition floor space and a separately financed 12,000-space parking structure. The site would also accommodate a new Red Sox baseball stadium. The Commission estimated the megaplex would cost \$943 million. The Commission also included \$99 million for Worcester and Springfield convention centers and a Regional Facilities Fund (need those central and western Mass. legislators on board).

Optimists, that Megaplex Commission. It anticipated attracting the Super Bowl in 2001, the NCAA Final Four Tournaments and national political conventions every few decades.

Opposition to the football stadium from South Boston residents led to the defeat of the megaplex proposal, commitments for infrastructure improvements for the Patriots in Foxboro, and a commitment for the \$700 million convention center now under construction.

Welcome to The Boston Informer!

The goal is simple: provide concise public information on construction projects, planning initiatives, and whatever else affects living and working in Boston. Welcome to *The Boston Informer*!

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Urban Mechanic?

THE BOSTON INFORMER

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You Were Asking

- Q. I used to hear about EDIC, the City's Economic Development and Industrial Commission. Does it still exist or is it part of the Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)?**
- A. Both.** Legally EDIC still exists, but its director is the BRA director (Mark Maloney) and it has the same Board of Directors as the BRA, who hold separate meetings for EDIC matters.
- Q. A Massport spokesman was recently quoted as saying, "Massport has a strong history of good relations with the citizens of the community." Is this true?**
- A. Ask any long-term resident of East Boston.**
- Q. I recently read about the "sausage parcel" in the South Boston piers area. Are there other similar parcels that are likely to be developed soon?**
- A. Yes,** the lamb chop parcel, link parcel, pork [barrel] parcel...
- Q. Does the Mayor's Central Artery Completion Task Force have official status as the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for the design and building of the surface artery?**
- A. Technically, no,** although it acts as the CAC. While originally acknowledged as the CAC by the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office, the proponent, the Mass. Turnpike Authority, has never agreed as long as the Task Force is under the auspices of the Mayor and accepts his coffee and doughnuts.
- Q. I heard that due to the "fiscal crisis," the Mayor is making public trash barrels into coin-operated receptacles, a mini "pay as you throw." Is this true?**
- A. No...** although clean-up campaigns such as "Boston Shines" would lead one to believe that basic city services are outside what we pay taxes for.



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